

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1252

As Reported by House Committee On:
Children & Family Services

Title: An act relating to faith-based chemical dependency treatment programs.

Brief Description: Exempting faith-based chemical dependency treatment programs from state regulation.

Sponsors: Representatives Boldt, Mulliken, Schindler and Lambert.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Children & Family Services: 2/5/01, 2/22/01 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Faith-based chemical dependency programs are required to conspicuously display a statement about the nature of the services offered.
- A person entering such a program is required to sign a declaration stating that she or he understands the nature of the services offered by the program.
- State or federal benefits may not be denied to a person because the person is participating in a licensed faith-based residential chemical dependency treatment program.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Boldt, Republican Co-Chair; Tokuda, Democratic Co-Chair; Kagi, Democratic Vice Chair; Morell, Republican Vice Chair; Ballasiotes, Campbell, Darneille, Dickerson, Miloscia and Pflug.

Staff: Deborah Frazier (786-7152).

Background:

Residential and outpatient chemical dependency treatment programs may choose to be

regulated by the Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse (DASA) of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). Certification of programs is voluntary.

Residential chemical dependency treatment programs must meet licensing requirements established by the Department of Health (DOH).

State and federal treatment funding currently is limited to programs certified by DASA. To be certified, programs that include a religious component must make participation in that aspect of the program voluntary.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The bill defines religious organization.— Faith based chemical dependency programs are required to conspicuously display a statement about the nature of the services offered. A person entering such a program is required to sign a declaration stating that she or he understands the nature of the services offered by the program.

State or federal benefits may not be denied to a person because the person is participating in a licensed faith-based residential chemical dependency treatment program.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The original bill exempted chemical dependency treatment programs operated by religious organizations from licensing by DOH and from regulation by DASA of DSHS. The substitute bill eliminates this exemption.

The original bill prohibited these programs from serving minors, offering medical care, medical detoxification, or medical withdrawal services. The substitute bill eliminates this prohibition.

The original bill allowed state or federal benefits to continue to be granted to a person participating in an unlicensed faith-based residential chemical dependency treatment program. The substitute bill allows these benefits to be granted if the program is licensed.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: We support this bill. We already have people sign an agreement about the nature of our services. We contract for medical and detox services. We'd like to be able to access state and federal funding, which we can't get if we're not licensed.

Testimony Against: We can't support a double standard for secular and faith-based programs. Uncertified programs have no standards for background checks to screen out sex predators as employees. These programs are exempted from treatment standards for their staff.

Testified: (In support) James Jones and Frederick Robinson III, Union Gospel Mission; Duffy Hobbs, Church of Living Water "Celebrate Recovery"; and Bob Higley, Washington Evangelicals for Responsible Government.

(Opposed) Helen Gorsuch, Association of Alcoholism-Addiction Programs; Dr. Pat Knox, Recovery Centers of King County; John Wise, West Sound Treatment Center; Scott Munson and Bill Starr, Sundown M Ranch; and Ken Stark, Department of Health and Human Services.